



# **Department of Commerce Safety Report**

**December 2002**

# **Safety Report December 2002**

## **Introduction**

This report provides an update to Department of Commerce (DOC) managers and employees on the progress of Departmental safety initiatives and information regarding important Department-wide safety issues for December 2002. The report also contains the latest available accident data for the Department. Section One of the report, Program Initiatives, provides updates on the safety initiatives outlined in the Safety Program Plan available at <http://ohrm.doc.gov/safetyprogram/safety.htm>. Section Two, Significant Safety Issues, outlines safety issues and concerns which arose in December 2002. Section Three, Injury Statistics, provides statistics regarding Department injuries, as reported to the Workers' Compensation Program for November 2002, and an analysis of the data to assist bureaus in focusing their safety efforts. Section Four, Survey Results, provides the December results from the on-line survey available through the intranet Occupational Safety and Health (OSH) Program Web Site.

## **Section One: Program Initiatives**

***Senior Executive Service Safety Awareness:*** A safety training program was developed for Senior Executive Service employees, and will be distributed in the month of January. The program highlights the Commerce safety philosophy, describes roles and responsibilities with regard to workplace health and safety, and takes about 30 minutes to complete. The program also includes a video statement from Deputy Secretary Samuel Bodman emphasizing the importance of active participation in workplace safety.

***Safety and Health Managers Meeting:*** The Commerce Safety Managers held their monthly meeting on December 12, 2002. The Commerce Safety Director, Tony Pierpoint, presided over the meeting. The key topics included the Senior Executive Service Training Module, FY03 Safety Action Plan, Bloodborne Pathogens Training, Commerce Safety Council Meeting, Herbert C. Hoover Building safety inspection, and the Commerce annual report to the Occupational Safety and Health Administration.

***Injury Reporting and Tracking:*** The OSH Program is working with the workers' compensation contractor, CCSI, Inc., to obtain direct, view access capability for bureau safety managers. With that capability, bureau safety managers will be able to view the most recent information on reported workplace injuries at Commerce facilities. Final system modifications are being made and the new system will be available to safety managers in the month of January.

## Section Two: Significant Safety Issues

### *Supervisory Responsibilities:*

The most important responsibility a supervisor has is ensuring a safe workplace. That responsibility is inherent to all supervisors and is specified under Department of Labor, Occupational Safety and Health Administration regulations, 29 Code of Federal Regulations, Part 1960. To meet their responsibilities supervisors must:

- Comply with safety and health rules, regulations, and orders.
- Ensure that employees receive proper instruction on safe work practices.
- Advise employees of any potential hazards.
- Ensure that employees perform their jobs safely.
- Ensure that annual and periodic hazard inspections are conducted.
- Promptly respond to worker complaints and correct workplace hazards.
- Maintain records of training and inspections.

More information is available at <http://ohrm.doc.gov/safetyprogram/safety.htm>.

## Section Three: Injury Statistics and Analysis

This section provides information on the total number of Departmental injuries for the past five years, and analyzes the types of injuries across the Department. The information below is updated using November 2002 statistics. Due to late submissions, processing limitations, and to ensure the accuracy of the information, this section will continue to include information up to the previous month. The data presented in the charts and tables are based upon Departmental Workers' Compensation Program records.

***Incidence Rate:*** The incidence rate (IR) represents the number of injuries and illnesses per 100 full-time workers and is calculated as follows:

$$IR = \frac{N}{EH}(200,000)$$

N	=	Number of injuries and illnesses
EH	=	Total hours worked by all employees during the year <sup>1</sup>
200,000	=	Base for 100 equivalent full-time workers (40 hours per week, 50 weeks per year)

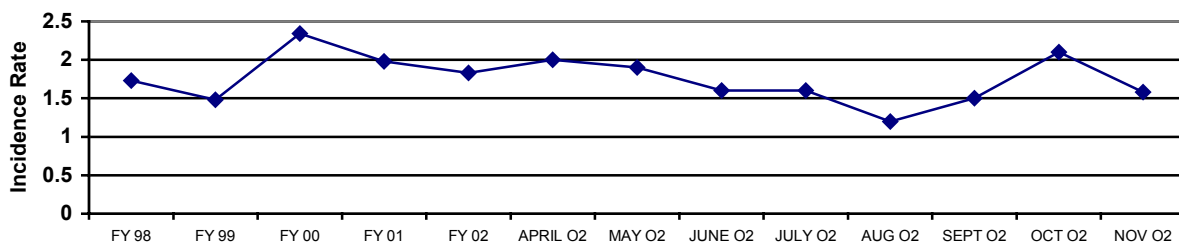
<sup>1</sup> The total hours worked were determined based on the total number of employees and the average hours.

The Commerce Workers' Compensation Program keeps records on all injury and illness claims, even those that did not include any lost work time. An accounting of all incidents allows follow-up and more comprehensive program review by safety representatives. However, for comparison to industry trends, it is important to identify those incidents that are recordable under Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) standards. An OSHA recordable incident is a work-related injury or illness that resulted in one or more of the following: medical treatment beyond first aid, a significant injury or illness diagnosed by a physician or other licensed health care professional, days away from work, restricted work or transfer to another job, loss of consciousness, or death.

For comparative purposes, we have included a table, table 1A, which provides only data on recordable incidents. The remaining tables and charts include data for all cases submitted to the Workers' Compensation Program.

Chart 1

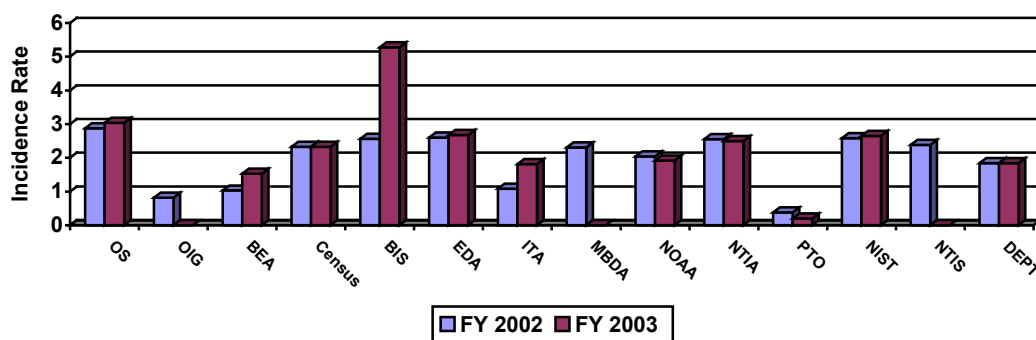
Total Case Incidence Rate Trend



Major Findings include:

- **The FY03 Total Case Incidence Rate (TCIR) for Commerce is equal to the FY02 rate, but down 7 percent from FY01.** The TCIR is 1.84 for FY03 and FY02, and 1.98 for FY01. The number of injuries for October was up from previous months (see chart 1). At Commerce, more injuries occur during the fall and winter months, mostly from slips and falls. A total of 105 Workers' Compensation claims were submitted thus far for FY03.
- **Of the larger bureaus, the National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST), Office of the Secretary (OS), and the International Trade Administration (ITA) have higher TCIRs for FY03 when compared to FY02 (see table 1 and chart 2).** The TCIR for NIST is three percent higher than last year. NIST had five injuries reported for the month of November and eight for the month of October. The TCIR for OS is six percent higher than last year. The TCIR for ITA is 68 percent higher than FY02.

Chart 2



- **Of the smaller bureaus (i.e., bureaus with less than 500 employees), the Bureau of Industry and Security (BIS) and the Technology Administration (not shown) have substantially higher TCIRs for FY03 when compared to FY02.** Two BIS employees were injured during the month of November. One BIS employee was injured during training at the Federal Law Enforcement Training Center, and another employee was injured in an automobile accident. The Technology Administration (TA) has not had an injury since before FY98. One TA employee was injured in October 2002, resulting in a current injury rate of 14.81
- **The Total Recordable Case Incidence Rate (TCRIR) for Commerce is down from previous years.** The TCRIRs for Commerce were 1.72 in FY01, 1.60 in FY02, and 1.55 for FY03.

**Types of Injuries:** Many of the injuries reported can be prevented through improved safety awareness and proper maintenance. A Departmental and bureau focus on eliminating injuries and illnesses is essential. Eliminating injuries and illnesses can be accomplished by evaluating the types of claims submitted and structuring safety awareness training programs to eliminate accidents. Information on types of injuries is provided in charts 4 and 5, and tables 2 and 2A. Key findings are explained below:

- **“Slips/Falls” continue to be the most prevalent type of injury.** “Slips/falls” accounted for 36 percent of all injuries within the Department for FY02 and the month of November 2002. More attention should be given to walking surfaces to reduce injuries from slips and falls. Floors that are wet from mopping should have highly visible warning signs, so employees know to avoid those areas. Trips from cords strung across floors continue to cause injuries. Telephone lines, electrical cords, and other cords should also be routed away from walking areas.

- **“Struck and Contact” injuries were second in frequency for November 2002.** These injuries combined for 21 percent of those reported for FY02, and 31 percent for November 2002. A majority of the injuries were caused when employees struck open drawers, doors, or low overhead clearances. Those injuries can be avoided by closing drawers that are not being used. Employees should also be aware of their surroundings and use caution. Low overhead clearances should be marked with highly visible paint or tape.
- **“Exertion” injuries remain a concern.** “Exertion” injuries were 20 and 22 percent of total injuries for FY02 and the month of November, respectively. To prevent back injuries, employees should use carts to move objects, and avoid hand carrying them. The proper lifting technique includes keeping the back straight and lifting with the legs. For jobs that require repetitive motion, an ergonomics assessment should be conducted.
- **“Exposures” were evident as well.** Three illnesses associated with exposure were reported for the month of November. Most exposure illnesses can be prevented through proper ventilation and use of personal protective equipment.

**Chart 4**  
**Injury Type As Percentage of Total Injuries for**  
**FY 2002**

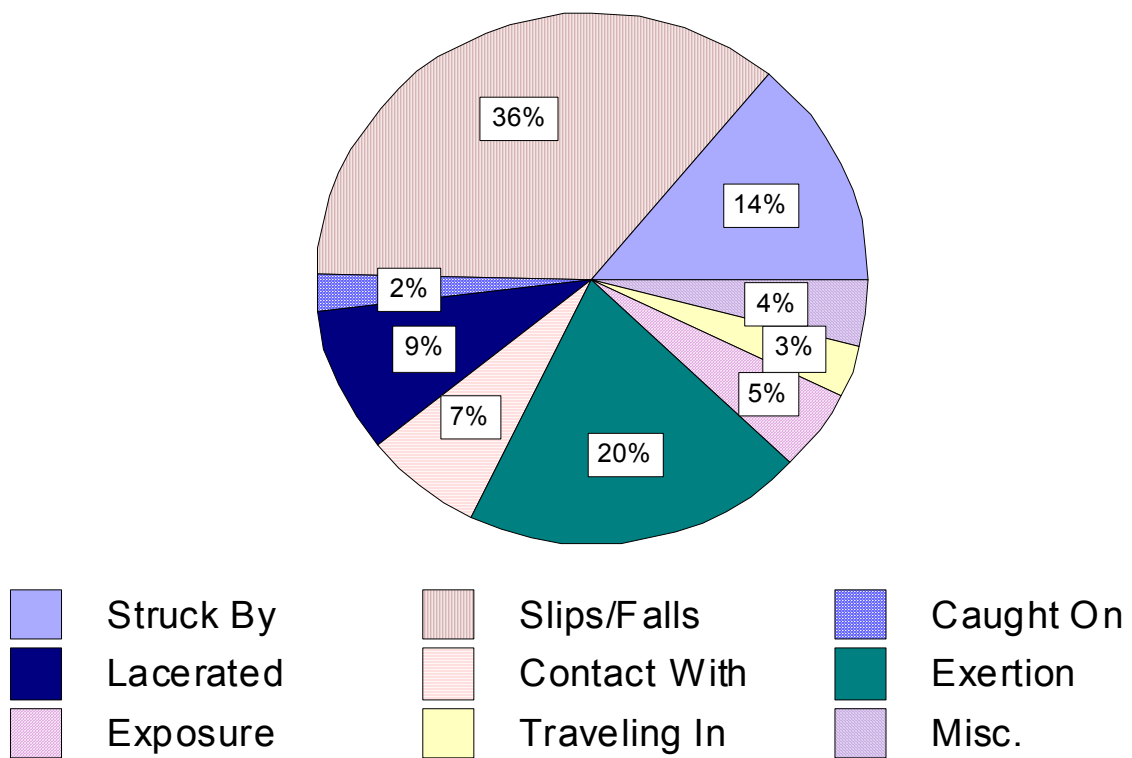
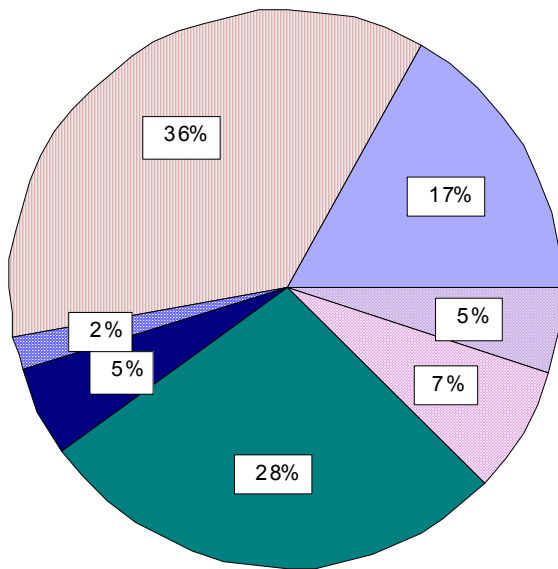


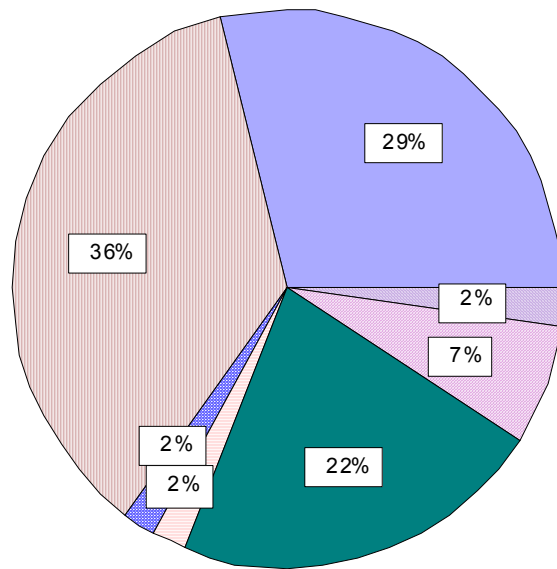
Chart 5

## Injury Type As Percentage Of Total Injuries

OCTOBER



NOVEMBER





**TABLE 1**  
**TOTAL CASE INCIDENCE RATE**

Bureau	FY1998		FY 1999		FY 2000		FY 2001		FY2002		October 2002		November 2002		FY 2003 (To Date)	
	No.	Rate	No.	Rate	No.	Rate	No.	Rate	No.	Rate	No.	Rate	No.	Rate	No.	Rate
Office of the Secretary	17	2.38	19	2.20*	35	3.94	22	2.47	23	2.88	3	4.56	1	1.52	4	3.04
Office of Inspector General	2	1.22	2	1.32	4	2.98	3	2.15	1	0.82	0	0	0	0	0	0
Bureau of Economic Analysis	8	1.75	4	0.88	1	0.23	5	1.12	4	1.03	0	0	1	3.06	1	1.53
Bureau of the Census	282	1.34	311	1.04	383	2.83	393	2.41	241	2.33	21	2.53	17	2.09	38	2.33
Bureau of Industry and Security	10	3.02	11	3.08	15	4.06	9	2.44	9	2.56	1	3.53	2	7.04	3	5.28
Economic Development Administration	4	1.72	9	3.67	4	1.69	5	2.08	6	2.60	0	0	1	5.35	1	2.68
International Trade Administration	26	1.33	18	0.92	24	1.23	12	0.62	18	1.08	2	1.45	3	2.18	5	1.81
Minority Business Development Agency	1	1.13	1	1.10	3	3.40	4	4.36	2	2.31	0	0	0	0	0	0
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration	280	2.52	317	2.78	307	2.69	247	2.18	228	2.04	23	2.46	13	1.39	36	1.92
National Telecommunications & Information Administration	3	1.22	2	0.88	2	0.87	7	3.03	6	2.55	0	0	1	4.99	1	2.50
Patent and Trademark Office	38	0.73	27	0.47	29	0.50	31	0.55	24	0.38	1	0.20	1	0.20	2	0.20
Technology Administration	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	30.30	0	0	1	14.81
National Institute of Standards and Technology	105	3.57	84	2.87	79	2.82	68	2.34	76	2.58	8	3.27	5	2.04	13	2.65
National Technical Information Service	2	0.66	6	2.61	4	2.15	1	0.52	4	2.38	0	0	0	0	0	0
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>778</b>	<b>1.73</b>	<b>811</b>	<b>1.48</b>	<b>890</b>	<b>2.34</b>	<b>807</b>	<b>1.98</b>	<b>642</b>	<b>1.84</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>2.10</b>	<b>45</b>	<b>1.58</b>	<b>105</b>	<b>1.84</b>
<b>Decennial Census 2000</b>	182	3.4	890	11.3	4798	6.7	32	13.3								

\* Total Case Incidence Rate includes all cases reported to the Workers' Compensation Program.

\*\* Population fluctuations can have a serious positive or negative impact on the Total Case Incidence Rate.

**TABLE 1A**  
**TOTAL RECORDABLE CASE INCIDENCE RATE\***

Bureau	FY1998		FY 1999		FY 2000		FY 2001		FY2002		October 2002		November 2002		FY 2003 (To Date)	
	No.	Rate	No.	Rate	No.	Rate	No.	Rate	No.	Rate	No.	Rate	No.	Rate	No.	Rate
Office of the Secretary	17	2.38	19	2.20*	30	3.38	17	1.91	22	2.75	3	4.56	1	1.52	4	3.04
Office of Inspector General	2	1.22	1	0.66	3	2.24	3	2.15	1	0.82	0	0	0	0	0	0
Bureau of Economic Analysis	7	1.53	4	0.88	0	0	5	1.12	3	0.77	0	0	0	0	0	0
Bureau of the Census	244	1.15	288	0.96	345	2.55	332	2.04	212	2.05	20	2.41	12	1.47	32	1.96
Bureau of Industry and Security	8	2.42	10	2.80	13	3.52	8	2.17	9	2.56	1	3.53	1	3.51	2	3.52
Economic Development Administration	4	1.72	8	3.26	4	1.69	5	2.08	6	2.60	0	0	0	0	0	0
International Trade Administration	24	1.23	17	0.86	22	1.13	11	0.57	10	0.60	2	1.45	3	2.18	5	1.81
Minority Business Development Agency	1	1.13	1	1.10	2	2.27	4	4.36	2	2.31	0	0	0	0	0	0
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration	260	2.34	275	2.41	289	2.53	225	1.98	203	1.81	22	2.35	12	1.28	34	1.82
National Telecommunications & Information Administration	3	1.22	2	0.88	2	0.87	5	2.16	3	1.27	0	0	1	4.99	1	2.50
Patent and Trademark Office	35	0.67	26	0.45	29	0.50	31	0.55	24	0.38	1	0.20	1	0.20	2	0.20
Technology Administration	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	30.30	0	0	1	14.81
National Institute of Standards and Technology	87	2.96	76	2.60	66	2.36	55	1.89	59	2.00	6	2.46	1	0.41	7	1.43
National Technical Information Service	2	0.66	5	2.18	4	2.15	1	0.52	3	1.78	0	0	0	0	0	0
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>694</b>	<b>1.54</b>	<b>732</b>	<b>1.34</b>	<b>809</b>	<b>2.13</b>	<b>702</b>	<b>1.72</b>	<b>557</b>	<b>1.60</b>	<b>56</b>	<b>1.96</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>1.12</b>	<b>88</b>	<b>1.55</b>
<b>Decennial Census 2000</b>	182	3.4	890	11.3	4798	6.7	32	13.3								

\* Total Case Incidence Rate includes all cases reported to the Workers' Compensation Program.

\*\* Population fluctuations can have a serious positive or negative impact on the Total Case Incidence Rate.

**Table 2**

**INJURY TYPES BY BUREAU  
AGENCIES WITH MORE THAN 500 EMPLOYEES  
(Through November 2002)**

<b>BUREAU</b>	<b>NOAA</b>			<b>CENSUS</b>			<b>NIST</b>			<b>PTO</b>			<b>ITA</b>			<b>OS</b>			<b>TOTAL</b>
<b>Fiscal Year</b>	<b>01</b>	<b>02</b>	<b>03</b>	<b>01</b>	<b>02</b>	<b>03</b>	<b>01</b>	<b>02</b>	<b>03</b>	<b>01</b>	<b>02</b>	<b>03</b>	<b>01</b>	<b>02</b>	<b>03</b>	<b>01</b>	<b>02</b>	<b>03</b>	
Struck By/Against An Object	24	29	9	56	27	5	16	8	3	6	4	1	1	1	1	5	2	1	199
Falls/Slips	72	59	11	153	96	17	19	22	4	13	7	1	5	7	3	10	2	1	502
Caught On An Object	4	5	1	9	8	1	1	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	1	0	34
Cuts/Bites	20	26	1	36	19	2	12	9	0	2	2	0	1	0	0	0	2	0	132
Contact With An Object	13	19	0	24	11	1	1	6	0	6	6	0	1	2	0	1	1	0	92
Exertion/ Motion	64	64	10	54	37	9	7	17	3	3	2	0	1	2	0	3	1	2	279
Exposure To Chemicals/ Elements	13	9	2	7	6	2	3	3	2	0	1	0	1	6	1	0	12	0	68
Traveling In Car/Metro/ Taxi	4	10	0	10	16	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	43
Miscellaneous*	2	7	2	8	21	1	1	8	1	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	55
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>216</b>	<b>228</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>357</b>	<b>241</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>76</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>1404</b>

\* Miscellaneous includes injuries not covered in the standard OSHA types of injuries. These include twisting/bending injuries, emotional/psychological stress injuries, injuries which exacerbate a preexisting condition resulting in conditions such as heart attack, seizures, and stroke.

\*\* Decennial Census claims were omitted to provide a clearer picture of injury trends

**Table 2A**

**INJURY TYPES BY BUREAU**

**AGENCIES WITH LESS THAN 500 EMPLOYEES**

**(Through November 2002)**

Bureau	OIG			ESA/BEA			EDA			TA			NTIS			NTIA			MBDA			BIS			Total
Fiscal Year	01	02	03	01	02	03	01	02	03	01	02	03	01	02	03	01	02	03	01	02	03	01	02	03	
Struck By/Against An Object	0	0	0	2	1	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	1	1	0	0	0	0	2	1	13
Falls/Slips	2	0	0	2	2	1	4	5	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	3	3	0	3	1	0	6	0	0	33
Caught On An Object	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	2
Cuts/Bites	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Contact With An Object	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	3	0	6
Exertion/ Motion	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	2	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	2	2	2	10
Exposure to Chemicals/ Elements	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Traveling In Car/Metro/ Taxi	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1
Miscellaneous*	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	5
<b>Total</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>71</b>

\* Miscellaneous includes injuries not covered in the standard OSHA types of injuries. These include twisting/bending injuries, emotional/psychological stress injuries, injuries which exacerbate a preexisting condition resulting in conditions such as heart attack, seizures, and stroke.

## Section Four: Survey Results

We continue to receive comments through the Safety Survey Web Site. We are using employee comments to help shape a safety program responsive to employee issues and concerns. The Web Site can be accessed through the Office of Human Resources Management Homepage at <http://ohrm.doc.gov/>.

During the month of December, we received 126 responses through the Web Site survey. The next Newsletter will provide details on some of the comments received and how we are addressing them. The Newsletter will be available on the OSH Program Web Site.

### *Safety Survey Statistics*

The following tables provide some data regarding the distribution of responses by bureau and general geographical area, as well as general safety impressions.

#### Safety Survey August Results

Have you experienced a safety lapse in your work area during the past 3 months?		
Answer	Count	Percent
No	89	71%
Yes	31	24%
No Answer	6	5%

Have you noticed any safety improvements in your work area or in the Department as a whole during the past 3 months?		
Answer	Count	Percent
No	84	67%
Yes	34	27%
No Answer	8	6%

Bureau Breakdown		
Answer	Count	Percent
BEA	1	0.79%
BXA	2	1.59%
CENSUS	38	30.1%
EDA	2	1.59%
ESA	1	0.79%
ITA	7	5.55%
MBDA	4	3.17%
NIST	3	2.38%
NOAA	54	42.86%
NTIA	2	1.59%
OS	2	1.59%
PTO	2	1.59%
No Answer	8	6.35%

Geographical Location		
State	Count	Percent
CA	1	0.79%
CO	8	6.34%
DC	21	16.66%
HI	4	3.17%
IA	1	0.79%
IL	1	0.79%
IN	4	3.17%
KS	2	1.59%
MA	3	2.38%
MD	56	44.44%
MI	1	0.79%
MN	1	0.79%
SC	1	0.79%
SD	1	0.79%
TX	2	1.59%
VA	12	9.52%
WA	3	2.38%
WY	2	1.59%